

TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS NEWS

Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health

Spring, 1998

Vol. 1, No. 3

1997 Annual Conference a Success; "5 Stars" Awarded

The 43rd Annual Conference on Vital Statistics, December 7-9, 1997, held in Austin covered over forty topics from vital records disaster prevention, preparedness and planning, to how to establish a private cemetery. Over 500 county and district clerks, funeral directors, city secretaries, midwives, justices of the peace, hospital administrators and their staff participated in the three day conference.

The highlight of the conference was the recognition of 26 local registrar offices statewide that were recipients of the Bureau of Vital Statistics' 5 Star Vital Registration award. The 26 local registrars offices (out of over 600) listed on the right met 5 criteria to achieve this award. Each office had to exceed state averages on timeliness, rejection rate, and quality, as well as satisfy training and issuance requirements.

The highest award of Excellence in Vital Registration went to the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District Vital Statistics Office — Alice Suter, Local Registrar. This office averaged 17.79 days for filing records with a rejection rate of only 0.48%.



Other offices honored were:



Abilene Public Health District—Janice Loudon, City Registrar

Amarillo, Office of Vital Statistics—James Preston, Local Registrar

Andrews County, Office of the County Clerk—F. William Hoermann, County Clerk

Athens, Henderson County, Office of the County Clerk—Gwen Moffeit, County Clerk



Bryan Municipal Court, Vital Statistics—Mary Lynne Galloway, City Secretary



Coleman County, Office of the County Clerk—Joann Hale, County Clerk

Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health District—Nina M. Sisley, M. D., Local Registrar

Dalhart, Office of the City Secretary—Janice Alexander, City Secretary

Galveston County, Health District—Ralph D. Morris, M.D., Local Registrar

Grapevine, Vital Division—Linda Huff, City Secretary Statistics

Hallettsville, Lavaca County Precinct 1, Justice of the Peace Office—Micah Harmon, J. P.



Henderson, Rusk County, Office of the County Clerk—Frank Hudson, County Clerk



Laredo Health Department—Jerry R. Robinson, Director

Llano County, Office of the County Clerk—Betty Sue Hoy, County Clerk

Lewisville, Office of the City Secretary—Marty Hendrix, City Secretary

Longview, Gregg County, Office of the County Clerk—Laurie Woloszyn, County Clerk

Lubbock City Health Department-Vital Statistics—Kaythie Darnell, City Secretary

Madisonville, Madison County, Office of the County Clerk—Joyce Coleman, County Clerk



Odessa, Ector County, Office of the County Clerk—Barbara Bedford, County Clerk



Port Arthur, Vital Statistics—Rhonda Poindexter, City Secretary

Quitman, Wood County, Office of the County Clerk—Brenda Taylor, County Clerk

San Angelo, Tom Green County, Office of the County Clerk—Judith Hawkins, County Clerk

Stephenville, Erath County, Office of the County Clerk—Nelda Crockett, County Clerk

Temple, Office of the City Secretary—Clydetta Entzminger, City Secretary

Tyler, Smith County, Public Health District—Dominic E. Sciarrini, Local Registrar



Weatherford, Parker County, Office of the County Clerk—Jeane Brunson, County Clerk



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Remote Birth Access Available Through the Internet

Certified copies of birth certificates for most people born in Texas are now obtainable at over 90 local registrar offices across the state of Texas. The Bureau of Vital Statistics, within the Texas Department of Health, has linked its birth records via the Internet to these offices, giving them access to the statewide database.

The local registrar office with Remote Access can print an abstract of birth facts that is a legal birth certificate. It is no longer necessary to travel or write to the place of birth or state BVS office to obtain a certified copy of a birth certificate.

Many local registrars are eligible to begin using the Remote Birth Access service. These registrars generally experience increased revenue from the sale of certified copies and a reduction of costs associated with issuance. In the future, by having Remote Birth Access, some local registrars will also be able to eliminate permanent storage of paper records in their offices (certain conditions will apply).

For local registrars wanting to find out more specific information on how to become a Remote Birth Access site, please contact Barbara Mullings at (512) 458-7692.

Dear State Registrar Correction

We would like to make a correction for the last "Dear State Registrar," regarding who may certify a Texas Certificate of Death. A November 12, 1997 (No. 97-101) Office of the Attorney General Letter Opinion argued that municipal court judges do not have the authority to order a body to be transferred to an approved forensic facility or order an autopsy. This opinion also stated, however, that a county judge or justice of the peace has the statutory authority to provide for a "temporary justice of the peace" to conduct the inquest, when a justice of the peace in the county in which the death occurred is not available. Based on these findings, an individual (including a municipal court judge) does not have the authority to conduct an inquest and certify a Texas Certificate of Death in place of an unavailable justice of the peace, unless he or she has been appointed "temporary justice of the peace" by a county judge or justice of the peace in the county in which the death occurred.

If you have a question, please e-mail us at bvsweb@tdh.state.tx.us, fax it to (512)458-7233, or mail to Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health, 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX 78756-3191. Attn: Texas Vital Statistics News.

Custom User Reports in Certificate Manager

Certificate Manager, the Texas electronic birth registration system, provides hospitals with a database of births that occur in their facility. This database can be queried in a wide variety of ways and provides a number of standard reports: daily reports, attendant statistical reports, catalogs, transmission, and user reports.

Any of these standard reports can also be customized, with the addition of other fields of information and/or the removal of unneeded information. The "User Report" is provided for building your own custom report form.

Any item of information entered into Certificate Manager may be included in a custom user report. With a little trial and error, building a customized report is not difficult. Select the standard report that most closely resembles the layout and items you want for your report. Select "Custom," then "edit." You can delete information (fields) that you do not need by selecting "Delete," and include information (fields) from the

birth certificate you would like on your report, by selecting "Add."

In order to format the information on your customized report, you will need to print the report and adjust the position and field lengths. You may have to repeat this step several times. Certificate Manager records in your new user report may be sorted in ascending or descending order by any field in Certificate Manager.

The details and complete instructions for modifying and creating new reports will be available in the new Certificate Manager 3.1 Manual, to be mailed to all Certificate Manager 3.1 Hospitals in April. For those hospitals who are still running Certificate Manager 2.6, a new manual will be sent to your facility once you upgrade to the Certificate Manager 3.1 version.

You may also call your Field Representative at any time for assistance in building a custom report. See page four for the Field Representative listing.

Texas Infant Mortality Rate Continues Decline; Below National Rate

Texas health workers have a right to be proud of the continued decline in Texas resident infant mortality rates. In terms of Texas resident infant deaths per 1,000 live births, Texas' infant mortality rate (IMR) has declined from 28.9 in 1960 to 6.3 in 1996.

As early as the 1940s, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, in Vital Statistics Rates in the United States 1900-1940, was making such statements as, "... nearly everyone would agree ... that the infant mortality rate ... is a most important index in Public Health work." More recently, the Texas Department of Health's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 1997-2001 stated, "The infant mortality rate is a measure of the overall health of a community. High infant mortality rates may indicate poor maternal health, inadequate prenatal care, infant malnutrition and or limited access to adequate health care."

Not only has Texas' IMR declined since 1960, it has declined faster than the nation's rate. From 1960 to 1978, Texas' IMR was consistently higher than the nation's rate (see graph). Then in 1979, Texas' IMR of 12.9 dropped below the national rate of 13.1. Since 1979, Texas' IMR has consistently remained below the national rate. Preliminary

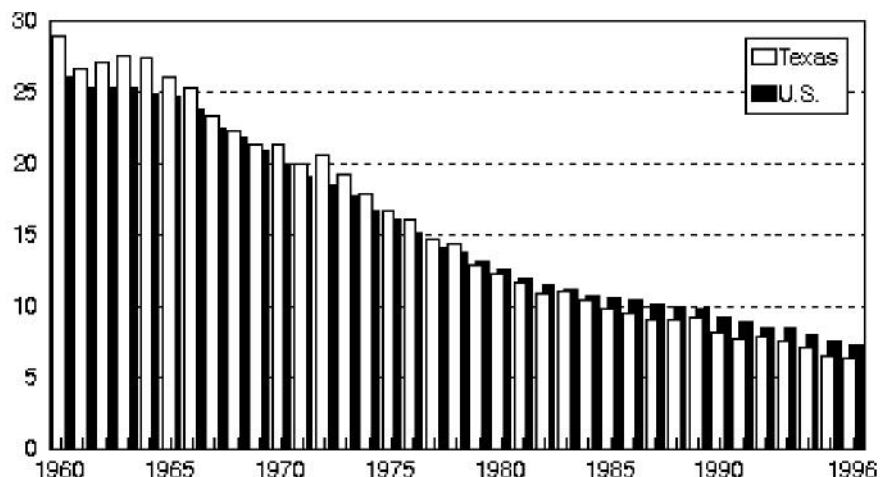
data for 1996 reflect a Texas rate of 6.3 compared to a national rate of 7.2.

Texas' 1995 IMR of 6.5 already meets the Healthy People 2000 objective for infant mortality which is to "reduce the infant mortality rate to no more than 7 per 1,000 live births." While Texas health workers

have reason to be proud, there is still much work to be done to further reduce the infant mortality rate and reduce disparities between racial or ethnic groups.

For additional information, contact the Statistical Services Division at (512) 458-7509 or bvsweb@tdh.state.tx.us.

Infant death rates for Texas and the U.S., 1960-1996

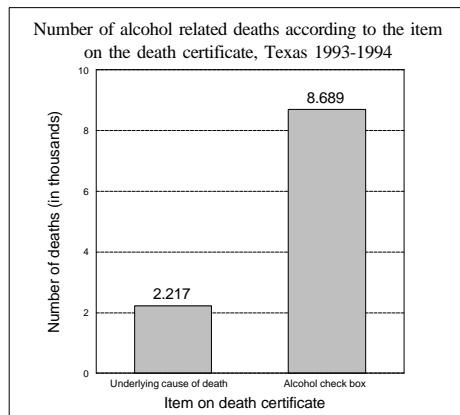


Note: infant deaths (under one year old) per 1,000 live births by residence
Source: National Center for Health Statistics. 1996 data are preliminary.

New Estimates on Alcohol Related Mortality

In an effort to more completely identify the impact of alcohol use on mortality, the Texas death certificate was revised in 1993. A new check box asks the certifier of death to specify whether alcohol use contributed to the death, with possible answers of yes, no, probably, and unknown.

During 1993-1994, 273,667 deaths occurred in Texas; only 2,217 deaths were related to alcohol use according to the underlying cause of death (0.8%). An additional 8,689 deaths were marked yes or probably on the check box (3.2%). This is



Correcting a Death Record with Minor Errors

If a death certificate is not correct, an amendment to the death record may be filed. The Application to Amend a Certificate of Death is the form that must be completed for this purpose.

Some of the more common corrections made on death certificates have been for the decedent's name, social security number, or color or race.

All items on the Application to Amend a Certificate of Death form must be completed. The information that needs to be added or corrected must be shown in Part II of the application. If correcting or adding information, the application should be signed by the funeral director, informant, or relative in the presence of a notary public.

If changing the decedent's or parents' name(s), we require one document in support of the change as well as the application. The supporting document may be the birth certificate of the decedent, a baptismal certificate, doctor's record, or copy of the social security application.

nearly 4 times the number of alcohol-related deaths than the underlying cause revealed.

Both sources agree that males, Hispanics and individuals with 9-12 years of education were most likely to die an alcohol-related death. However, the two sources differed when the age of decedent was examined.

The cause of death revealed that 40-49 year olds were more likely than any other age group to die from alcohol-related causes. The check box revealed that a younger group, 20-29 year olds, were more likely to die from alcohol-related causes.

In conclusion, the addition of the check box to the Texas death certificate allows a more comprehensive assessment of the effects of alcohol use on mortality than was previously possible using death certificate data. With information collected from the alcohol check box item, we now have the potential to more accurately monitor the impact of alcohol use on public health.

For a copy of the full report, or for additional information, contact the Statistical Services Division at (512) 458-7509 or bvsweb@tdh.state.tx.us.

Supplemental Registration: Paternity

If a father's name is not listed on a birth certificate, a new record based upon a paternity determination may be filed to add the father's name. The forms used for this purpose are the Application for Amended Birth Certificate Based on Paternity and the Acknowledgment of Paternity.

A paternity determination is one of the most common reasons for supplemental registration and there are two types of paternity that can be determined.

Voluntary Paternity

For a voluntary paternity, both forms must be completed and signed by both parents in the presence of a notary public.

If the parents are married, a certified copy of the marriage license may be submitted with the Application for Amended Birth Certificate Based on Paternity in place of the Acknowledgment of Paternity.

Court Ordered Paternity

For a court ordered paternity, the Application for Amended Birth Certificate Based on Paternity should be accompanied by a certified copy of the court order which establishes paternity. If paternity has been established through a Texas District Court since September 1, 1996, we do not need a certified copy of the court order because the information required is on the Court of Continuing Jurisdiction (CCJ) software.

The Application for Amended Birth Certificate Based on Paternity may be signed by only one parent if a certified copy of a court order which establishes paternity, or information from CCJ, will be used.

Fees

A total fee of \$36.00 will allow the customer to file a new birth record based upon a paternity determination (\$25.00) and receive one certified copy (\$11.00). The fee for each additional certified copy is \$11.00.

See Supplemental Registration, page 4

We are currently in the process of approving a policy that would allow the local registration officials to accept and file medical amendments. When this has been finalized, local registration officials will be notified.

We would love to hear from you! Fax us at (512) 458-7233, e-mail us at bvsweb@stats.tdh.state.tx.us or write us at Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health, 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX 78756.

Please list any topics you would like to see in this newsletter: _____

Please list any questions you have for Dear State Registrar: _____

Any other comments or suggestions: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Supplemental Registration

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Obtaining Forms

The Application for Amended Birth Certificate Based on Paternity and the Acknowledgment of Paternity may be obtained by calling, E-mailing, faxing, or mailing the address of the applicant to our Bureau. Our telephone number is **(512) 458-7111**; our e-mail address is **register@tdh.state.tx.us**; our fax number is **(512) 458-7506**; and our mailing address is 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, Texas 78756-3191.

Available Reports

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/bvs/reports.htm>

Texas Vital Statistics 1996
Texas Child Fatality Review Teams Annual Report 1995
1995 Mortality Report for Nursing Facilities and Related Institutions
Perinatal Mortality in Texas, 1989-1994
The impact of alcohol use on mortality: new estimates from the revised Texas death certificate
Delayed childbearing: increased maternal age at first birth and its association with labor and delivery outcomes.

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